

## Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 HA-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01  
INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15  
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INFO AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA  
AMEMBASSY MANAGUA  
AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE  
AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA  
USCINCSO QUARRY HEIGHTS CZ

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAN SALVADOR 4564

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PINT PINR PGOV SHUM ES  
SUBJ: TALKS BETWEEN REPRESENTATIVES OF BUSINESS COMMUNITY AND  
CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC PARTY (PDC) CONCERNING POSSIBILITY OF A  
"POLITICAL OPENING"

SUMMARY: IN AUGUST 28 LUNCHEON WITH EMBOFFS, FIDEL CHAVEZ  
MENA AND PABLO MAURICIO ALVERGUE, BOTH PROMINENT MEMBERS OF  
CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC PARTY (PDC), TALKED ABOUT DISCUSSIONS CUR-  
RENTLY BEING HELD BETWEEN PDC AND PROMINENT MEMBERS OF SALVA-  
DORAN BUSINESS GROUPS CONCERNING POSSIBILITY OF A "POLITICAL  
OPENING". END SUMMARY.

1. IN LUNCHEON ON AUGUST 28, POLITICAL OFFICER AND LABOR  
OFFICER MET WITH DR. FIDEL CHAVEZ MENA, MEMBER OF CHRISTIAN  
DEMOCRATIC PARTY (PDC) AND LAWYER FOR THE POMA GROUP, AND  
DR. PABLO MAURICIO ALVERGUE, A PDC MEMBER AND FORMER  
LAW PROFESSOR AT UNIVERSITY OF EL SALVADOR. DURING  
THE LUNCHEON, CHAVEZ REFERRED TO THE ON-AGAIN, OFF-AGAIN  
DIALOGUE THAT HAD BEEN GOING ON BETWEEN OPPOSITION  
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GROUPS AND ROMERO GOVERNMENT SINCE JULY 1977. HE SAID  
A NEW WRINKLE HAD BEEN ADDED DUE TO DIRECT TALKS NOW  
BEING HELD BETWEEN PDC AND PROMINENT LEADERS IN  
BUSINESS SECTOR CONCERNING WHAT FORMS A "POLITICAL  
OPENING" MIGHT TAKE AND UNDER WHAT CONDITIONS LEGITIMATE  
OPPOSITION PARTIES COULD AGAIN BEGIN TO PARTICIPATE IN  
THE POLITICAL PROCESS. CHAVEZ SAID THAT BUSINESS PEOPLE

PARTICIPATING IN TALKS WITH FRANCRACO DE SOLA (MEMBER OF ONE OF "FOURTEEN FAMILIES"); FRANCISCO CALLEJAS, PRESIDENT OF NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF PRIVATE ENTERPRISE (ANEP); ERNESTO RIVAS GALLONT, FORMER VICE-PRESIDENT OF ANEP; AND ROBERTO PALOMO, PRESIDENT OF ADOC SHOE COMPANY. CHAVEZ STATED THAT SEVERAL SESSIONS HAD ALREADY TAKEN PLACE AND THAT TWO MORE SESSIONS (AUGUST 29 AND AUGUST 31) WOULD TAKE PLACE THIS WEEK.

2. LABOR OFFICER ASKED IF PDC EXPECTED ANYTHING CONCRETE TO COME OUT OF TALKS WITH GOES, AS PREVIOUS EFFORTS TO ENGAGE IN DIALOGUE HAD APPEARED TO COME TO NOTHING. CHAVEZ REPLIED THAT PARTICIPATION OF PROMINENT BUSINESS PEOPLE IN TALKS WITH PDC GAVE HOPE THAT MORE CONCRETE RESULTS WOULD BE FORTHCOMING THIS TIME. HE COMMENTED THAT PDC WAS UNDER NO ILLUSIONS THAT BUSINESS REPRESENTATIVES HOLDING TALKS WITH PDC REPRESENTED ALL OF SALVADORAN BUSINESS SECTOR. NEVERTHELESS, CHAVEZ SAID THEY REPRESENTED A SIGNIFICANT SECTOR AND COULD BE EXPECTED TO BE LISTENED TO BY GOES.

3. POLITICAL OFFICER ASKED IF ALL OF PDC MEMBERSHIP WAS IN FAVOR OF TALKS WITH GOES AND BUSINESS REPRESENTATIVES. CHAVEZ REPLIED THAT HE ESTIMATED AT LEAST 80 PERCENT OF PDC WERE BEHIND THE EFFORT, EVEN IF MANY MEMBERS WERE PESSIMISTIC ABOUT TALKS RESULTING IN CONFIDENTIAL

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ANYTHING OF SUBSTANCE. POLITICAL OFFICER ASKED WHAT ROLES PDC ENVISIONED FOR NATIONAL REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT (MNR) AND COMMUNIST-DOMINATED NATIONALIST DEMOCRATIC UNION (UDN) IN THESE TALKS. CHAVEZ INDICATED THAT MNR REPRESENTED SUCH A SMALL, ALTHOUGH IMPORTANT, SECTOR OF SALVADORAN PUBLIC OPINION THAT HE DID NOT ENVISAGE A SIGNIFICANT ROLE FOR IT. ALVERGUE SAID THAT PDC WAS HOPEFUL OF MAINTAINING TIES WITH UDN BECAUSE OF ITS PROMINENT ROLE IN UNION MOVEMENT.

4. ALTHOUGH ASKED, CHAVEZ AND ALVERGUE GAVE NO INDICATION THAT CONCRETE MEASURES (SUCH AS CHANGES IN LAW OF DEFENSE AND GUARANTEE OF PUBLIC ORDER, RETURN OF EXILES, ETC.) HAD AS YET BEEN DISCUSSED. POLITICAL OFFICER STATED THAT AS TALKS WENT ON, HE HOPED CHAVEZ AND ALVERGUE WOULD KEEP IN TOUCH WITH EMBASSY TO SEE WHAT EMBOFFS COULD DO, WITHIN THE BOUNDS OF DIPLOMATIC PROPRIETY AND THE CONCEPT OF NON-INTERVENTION IN INTERNAL AFFAIRS OF ANOTHER COUNTRY, TO HELP ALONG PROCESS OF DIALOGUE BETWEEN GOES AND PDC. ALVERGUE SAID THAT SUCH AN EMBASSY ROLE WOULD BE MUCH APPRECIATED, THAT THE U.S. HUMAN RIGHTS POLICY AND SANCTIONS PROVIDED

IN IT WERE AMONG FACTORS THAT HAD INDUCED GOES TO  
CONTINUE ALKS WITH OPPOSITION.

5. COMMENT. BASED ON PAST EXPERIENCE AND THE LACK  
OF ANY MILITARY ROLE IN TALKS, EMBASSY VIEWS CHANCES  
OF PDC DIALOGUE WITH GOES AND BUSINESS REPRESENTATIVES  
YEILDING CONCRETE RESULTS WITH SOME SKEPTICISM.  
NEVERTHELESS, EMBASSY VIEWS CURRENT PDC TALKS WITH REPRE-  
SENTATIVES OF BUSINESS COMMUNITY AS AT LEAST FORMING A  
POSSIBLE BASIS FOR CONCRETE STEPS BEING TAKEN TOWARDS  
A "POLITICAL OPENING" BY GOES. CHAVEZ AND ALVERGUE  
COMMENTS CONCERNING MNR AND UDN RELATIONSHIP WITH PDC DO  
NOT COINCIDE WITH CATEGORIC STATEMENTS AT BREAKFAST MEETING  
MORNING AUGUST 21 ATTENDED BY EMBOFFS, PDC LEADERSHIP  
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(INCLUDING CHAVEZ) AND RICHARD FEINBERG, MEMBER OF STATE  
DEPARTMENT POLICY PLANNING STAFF. AT BREAKFAST MEETING,  
PDC LEADERS STATED THAT PDC HAD MADE FORMAL AND OPEN  
BREAK WITH MNR AND UDN IN MAY 1978. THIS BREAK HAS  
RECEIVED VERY LITTLE PUBLICITY AND THERE IS SPECULATION  
THAT PDC, WHILE OVERTLY DISASSOCIATING ITSELF FROM  
MNR AND UDN IN HOPE OF BETTER ACCOMMODATION WITH GOES  
AND WEALTHY ELITE, STILL WANT TO MAINTAIN BEHIND-SCENES  
ALLIANCE WITH MNR AND UDN.  
LUBENSKY

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## Message Attributes

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